

Wildflower Weekend 2004

SATURDAY, MAY 8

***Coffee with the Birds**

8:30 to 11:00 a.m.

Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day with a cup of shade-grown coffee, compliments of ARAMARK, the park's official concessioner, before heading out on a hike in search of birds. Find out how shade-grown coffee helps migratory songbirds that you see in Shenandoah. Meet first for coffee at Big Meadows Lodge Great Room, then drive to Fishers Gap Overlook (mile 49.4) for a stroll down the Rose River Fire Road. If you don't care for coffee, meet the group at 9 a.m. at Fishers Gap. 2 miles. Total climb: about 300 ft. Bring binoculars, if you can.

Alan Williams, Ecologist/Data Manager, Shenandoah National Park

Marvelous Millers Head

9:30 a.m. to noon

Hike down a rocky ridge to the observation platform at Millers Head (3,465 ft.), and a wonderful view of the Shenandoah Valley. Because the rock formation is granitic, you may find some uncommon plants here that don't grow on trails underlain by basalt. Steep uphill return. 1.6 miles. Total climb: about 450 ft. Meet at Millers Head trailhead: from Skyline Drive, turn into **south** entrance to Skyland (mile 42.5), pass stables and keep to left when road forks; park at top of hill.

Mara Meisel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park

Wildflower Identification for Beginners

10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

If wildflowers are casual acquaintances that you'd like to get to know better, this program's for you. Learn characteristics of some flower families and key out "mystery" flowers using a field guide. Meet at Milam Gap parking area (mile 52.8) for a slow-paced stroll.

Robyn Nolen, Volunteer Naturalist

South River Falls Hike

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

This hike is a favorite of wildflower lovers. Examine a wide variety of woodland flowers on this outstanding trail to a waterfall view. Steep. Long uphill return via fire road and Appalachian Trail. 3.5 miles. Total climb: about 850 ft. Meet at trailhead in South River Picnic Area (mile 62.8). Bring snacks or quick lunch.

Ann Vonnegut, Volunteer Naturalist

Bugs and Blooms

11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Children's program. Repeats at 2:00 p.m.

Through fun-filled activities, discover how plants and insects rely on each other in the Big Meadow. 1/2 mile.

Meet in front of Byrd Visitor Center (milepost 51).

Mathew Klozik, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park

The Silent Green Invasion

11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

What harm can oriental bittersweet or tree of heaven do in Shenandoah National Park? Find out how the invasion of exotic plants is challenging resource managers, and what we're doing about it. 20-minute PowerPoint program, followed by outdoor exploration. Meet at Byrd Visitor Center auditorium (milepost 51).

Ron Nemes, Biological Science Technician, Shenandoah National Park

Wonders of the Mill Prong

1:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Looking for a wildflower hike that's got some zip to its pace? This is it! Learn which flowers decorate the delightful trail leading to President Hoover's former fishing retreat, Rapidan Camp, with limited time for dawdling along the way. You may opt to return at your own pace. Steep in places; 3 small stream crossings. 4.1 miles. Total climb: about 870 ft. Meet at Milam Gap parking area (mile 52.8).

Jim Kirkwood, Volunteer Naturalist

***Butterfly Photography Workshop**

1:00 to 3:30 p.m.

Shenandoah National Park is a great place to hone your outdoor photography skills. Whether you own a 35mm SLR camera, a simple point-and-shoot, or a digital model, this program can help you take better pictures. Butterflies are often moving targets, but with patience and some new skills, you can capture their magnificent color and grace. 45-minute PowerPoint program, followed by Q&A, then an hour or so of field practice.

Meet in Byrd Visitor Center auditorium (milepost 51).

William B. Folsom, Professional Photographer

Bugs and Blooms

2:00 to 3:30 p.m. Children's program. See description of 11:00 a.m. program.

Lewis Mountain Stroll

4:00 to 5:30 p.m.

Discover many different flowering plants (and some gorgeous ferns!) on this short hike southward along the Appalachian Trail. 1/2 mile. Meet at Lewis Mountain Picnic Area (mile 57.5).

Mara Meisel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park

SUNDAY, MAY 9

Birds and Buds of Pocosin

8:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Celebrate the return of migrating songbirds to Shenandoah on this hike. Look and listen for scarlet tanagers, indigo buntings, redstarts, and many more as you identify wildflowers along the fire road to the ruins of Pocosin Mission. 2 miles. Total climb: about 400 ft. Meet at Pocosin parking area (mile 59.5, **unmarked**, east side of Skyline Drive).

Limited parking.

Diane Holsinger, Volunteer Naturalist

***Wildflowers "On the Rocks"**

10 a.m. to noon

Walk through ancient lava flows and volcanic ash deposits along the mossy, forested Appalachian Trail. This is one of the few trails in the park where you can see three distinct bedrock types within a mile. Discover how different rocks and soil affect plants on this brand new one-way hike. 1.2 miles. Total climb: about 200 ft. Meet at Crescent Rock Overlook (mile 44.4).

Sue Schaefer, Volunteer Naturalist

A Bear's Garden

10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Wildflowers line the Appalachian Trail as we hike northward on our way to Bearfence Mountain and a great view near summit (3,620 ft.). The last portion to the top is fairly steep. 2 miles. Total climb: about 400 ft. Meet at Lewis Mountain Picnic Area (mile 57.5). Bring snack or quick lunch.

Mara Meisel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park

Trillium Trail to Hightop

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Hike up the Appalachian Trail through patches of trillium and other wildflowers to the summit of Hightop Mountain (3,585 ft.) and a terrific view. 3 miles. Total climb: about 935 ft. Meet at parking area (mile 66.7). **Limited parking.**

Ann Vonnegut, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park

***Little Stony Man Hike**

1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Discover wildflowers on this brand new circuit hike to some of the most impressive views in the park! Hike the Appalachian Trail up to the summit of Stony Man Mountain (4,010 ft.), then to more awesome views from Little Stony Man Cliffs. Follow the Passamaquoddy Trail back to Skyland. 3.5 miles. Total climb: about 770 ft. Meet at Stony Man Nature Trail parking area, **north** entrance to Skyland (mile 41.7).

Tom Dierauf, Volunteer Naturalist

Butterfly Crawl

1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Car caravan.

It's like a pub crawl outdoors, and you search for butterflies instead of brews! Start in the Big Meadow and walk or drive your car in a caravan to other butterfly hotspots. Learn about the interaction between certain butterfly species and the wildflowers you see. Meet in front of Byrd Visitor Center (milepost 51).

Barb Norris, Volunteer Naturalist

Lewis Mountain Stroll

4:00 to 5:30 p.m.

Discover many different flowering plants (and some gorgeous ferns!) on this short hike southward along the Appalachian Trail. 1/2 mile. Meet at Lewis Mountain Picnic Area (mile 57.5).

Mara Meisel, Park Ranger, Shenandoah National Park

** Indicates programs that are new this year.*